

What is claimed is:

1. A document processing system having at least one computer running system software that interfaces with transport hardware to provide document control and capture document of images and document data in various formats, wherein an image file stores a plurality of captured document images for subsequent retrieval on an individual basis, the system including a computer readable storage medium storing the system software, the system software on the medium further comprising:

instructions for indexing the image file by creating an index file containing indexing data for the captured document images, the index file being in the form of a self-describing document wherein elements describe the indexing data for the captured document images to allow subsequent retrieval of the captured document images on an individual basis.

2. The document processing system of claim 1, wherein the index file follows a predetermined set of rules for that make the index valid.

3. The document processing system of claim 2, wherein the index file comprises a document type definition.

4. The document processing system of claim 3, wherein the index file is in accordance with the extensible markup language (XML).

5. A document processing system comprising:

a document transport; and

at least one computer running system software and interfacing with the document transport to provide document control and capture document images and document data in various formats, wherein an image file stores a plurality of captured document images for subsequent retrieval on an individual basis, the computer including a computer readable storage medium storing the system software, the system software on the medium further including instructions for indexing the image file by creating an index file containing indexing data for the captured document images, the index file being in the form of a self-describing document wherein elements describe the indexing data for the captured document images to allow subsequent retrieval on an individual basis.

6. The document processing system of claim 5, wherein the index file follows a predetermined set of rules for the self-describing document that make the self-describing document valid.

7. The document processing system of claim 5, wherein the predetermined set of rules is set forth in a document type definition (DTD).

8. The document processing system of claim 7, wherein the index file is in accordance with extensible markup language (XML).

9. A method of operating a document processing system of the type in which one or more computers running system software interface with transport hardware to provide document control and capture document images and document data in various formats, wherein an image file stores a plurality of captured document images for subsequent retrieval on an individual basis, the system including a computer readable storage medium storing the system software, the method comprising the step of:

indexing the image file by creating an index file containing indexing data for the captured document images, the index file being in the form of a self-describing document wherein elements describe the indexing data for the captured document images to allow subsequent retrieval on an individual basis.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

establishing a set of rules for the self-describing document that make the self-describing document valid, wherein the index file is created in accordance with the set of rules.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the predetermined set of rules is set forth in a document type definition (DTD).

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the index file is created in accordance with extensible markup language (XML).

13. A method for increasing the flexibility of storing and retrieving image data captured by a document processor, comprising the steps of:
- capturing image data in an imaging subsystem of the document processor;
 - associating the captured image data with an index file, wherein the index file is a document type definition file having a plurality of elements describing indexing data for the captured image data; and,
 - indexing the captured image data according to the index file to allow subsequent retrieval of the captured image data on an individual basis.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein the plurality of element declarations include first elements related to selected parameters of the document processing system and second elements related to selected parameters of each at least one document that is processed, and wherein the attribute declarations include attributes that describe detailed information about selected ones of the elements,
15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of:
- storing the image data and associated index file in storage means of the document processor.
16. The method of claim 14, wherein the document-type definition file includes a plurality of elements delineating parameters of the document processor.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the document-type definition file further includes a plurality of attributes associated with selected ones of the plurality of elements, the association being set forth in an attribute declaration list.
18. The method of claim 17, wherein the document-type definition file is created in accordance with the extensible markup language (XML).